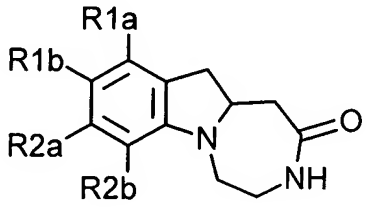
AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

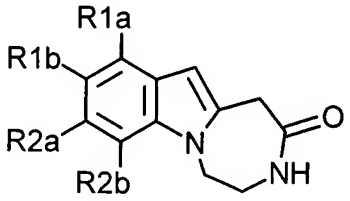
(1) Please replace the current Abstract with the following new Abstract

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides compounds of formula



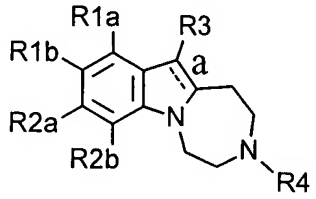
and



wherein R1a, R1b, R2a, and R2b are as described herein.

(2) Please replace the paragraph of formula I on page 3, line 17 to page 5, line 24 with the following paragraph:

A compound of formula I:



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where a is a single bond or double bond, and where

R1a, R1b, R2a and R2b are each independently

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, OR5, CONR5R6, COR5, $CO[[2]]_2R5$, $Y(CH_2)_mXR5$ or $YC(O)(CH_2)_mXR5$, where m = 0-3, Y = CH_2, S, O, or NR6, X = CH_2, S, O, NR6;

(b) $(CH[[2]]_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(c) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following:halogen, CN, NO_2, COR7, OR7, NR7R8, SR7, $CO[[2]]_2R7$, CONR7R8 or NR7COR8; and where

R3 is

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, alkyl, Ar, OR5, SR5, CHO, CONR5R6, COR5, $CO[[2]]_2R5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nXR5$, $C(O)C(O)XR5$, $(Y)_o(CH_2)_nC(O)XR5$, $C(O)(CH[[2]]_2)_nXR5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)R5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)S(O)_2R5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)OR5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)NR5R6$ where o = 0 or 1, n = 0-3, X = CH_2, S, O, or NR6 and Y=CH_2, S, O or NR6, where Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(b) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following: halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R8, SR10, $CO[[2]]_2R10$, CONR10R8 or NR10COR8; and where

R4, R5 and R6 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following: halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, $CO[[2]]_2R10$, CONR10R11 or NR10COR11; or where R5 and R6 are linked to form a 3 to 8 member ring; or

(b) $(CH_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; and where

R7, R8, and R9 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl groups, wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, CO[[2]]$_2$R10, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, or where R7, R8, or R9 are linked to form a ring; or

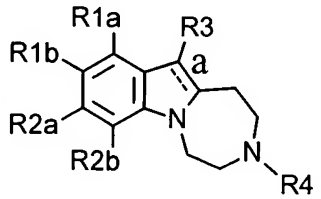
(b) (CH[[2]]$_2$)$_p$Ar where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR10, CF_3, OCF_3, SR10, SO_2R10, SO_2NR10R11, NR10R11, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, CO_2R10, COR10, or R10; and where

R10, R11 and R12 are each independently H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl;

or a stereoisomer or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

(3) Please replace the paragraph of formula I on page 9, line 1 to page 11, line 27 with the following paragraph:

A compound of formula I:



I

where a is a single bond or double bond, and where

R1a, R1b, R2a and R2b are each independently

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, OR5, CONR5R6, COR5, CO[[2]]$_2$R5, $Y(CH_2)_mXR5$ or $YC(O)(CH_2)_mXR5$, where m = 0-3, Y = CH_2, S, O, or NR6, X = CH_2, S, O, NR6;

(b) $(CH[[2]]_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(c) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following:halogen, CN, NO_2, COR7, OR7, NR7R8, SR7, CO[[2]]$_2$R7, CONR7R8 or NR7COR8; and where

R3 is

(a) H, Cl, Br, I, F, CN, CF_3, OCF_3, alkyl, Ar, OR5, SR5, CHO, CONR5R6, COR5, CO[[2]]$_2$R5, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nXR5$, $C(O)C(O)XR5$, $(Y)_o(CH_2)_nC(O)XR5$, $C(O)(CH[[2]]_2)_nXR5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)R5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)S(O)_2R5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)OR5$, $(Y)_o(CH[[2]]_2)_nN(R6)C(O)NR5R6$ where o = 0 or 1, n = 0-3, X = CH_2, S, O, or NR6 and Y=CH_2, S, O or NR6, where Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; or

(b) linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following: halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R8, SR10, CO[[2]]$_2$R10, CONR10R8 or NR10COR8; and where

R4, R5 and R6 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl; wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with one or more of the following:

halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, CO[[2]]$_2$R10, CONR10R11 or NR10COR11; or where R5 and R6 are linked to form a 3 to 8 member ring; or

(b) $(CH_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR7, CF_3, OCF_3, SR7, SO_2R7, SO_2NR7R8, NR7R8, CONR7R8, NR7COR8, NR7CONR8R9, CO_2R7, COR7, or R7; and where

R7, R8, and R9 are each independently

(a) H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl groups, wherein any of these groups other than H may be optionally substituted with halogen, CN, NO_2, COR10, OR10, NR10R11, SR10, CO[[2]]$_2$R10, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, or where R7, R8, or R9 are linked to form a ring; or

(b) $(CH[[2]]_2)_pAr$ where p = 0-3 and Ar is aryl or heteroaryl optionally substituted with one or more of the following: H, halogen, CN, NO_2, OR10, CF_3, OCF_3, SR10, SO_2R10, $SO_2NR10R11$, NR10R11, CONR10R11, NR10COR11, NR10CONR11R12, CO_2R10, COR10, or R10; and where

R10, R11 and R12 are each independently H, linear or branched C_1-C_8 alkyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkenyl, linear or branched C_2-C_8 alkynyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkyl, C_3-C_8 cycloalkenyl, or C_3-C_8 cycloalkynyl;

or a stereoisomer or pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.